

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace paragraph [0022] with the following amended paragraph:

**[0022]** The establishment of a secure connection between a server and a browser can be improved by batching the initial handshakes on the web server. In one embodiment the web server waits until it receives  $b$  handshake requests from  $b$  different clients. It treats these  $b$  handshakes as a batch, or set of handshakes, and performs the necessary computations for all  $b$  handshakes at once. Results show that, for  $b=4$ , batching the Secure Socket Layer ("SSL") handshakes in this way results in a factor of 2.5 speedup over doing the  $b$  handshakes sequentially, without requiring any additional hardware. While the Secure Socket Layer protocol is a widely utilized technique for establishing a secure network connection, it should be understood that the techniques described herein can be applied to the establishment of any secure network-based connection using any of a number of protocols.

Please insert the following paragraph after paragraph [0126]:

**[0126.1]** It should be noted that secure communications could include secure socket layer ("SSL") messages, transport layer security ("TLS") messages, or internet protocol secure ("IPSec") techniques.